



Coast Guard Flag Voice 16

SAFETY...IT'S A SNAP

In 1966, Congress enacted two laws designed to reduce traffic mishaps, injuries, and the more than 40,000 annual deaths on our nation's roads and highways. Unfortunately, these laws have had less than the desired impact in reducing traffic fatalities and increasing seat belt usage, and currently, only 68% of our nation's motorists use seat belts. Dissatisfied with the needless loss of life in motor vehicle accidents, in April 1997 President Clinton issued Executive Order 13043 that made the use of seat belts mandatory for all on-duty Federal employees. The White House also set national seat belt usage goals for all Americans of 85% by the year 2000 and 90% by the year 2005.

Motor vehicle mishaps are the number one cause of Coast Guard fatalities. Recent Coast Guard-wide seat belt surveys show 82% usage, well above the national average but far short of our goal. ALCOAST 062/98 of June 1998, issued by the Commandant, challenges Team Coast Guard to increase seat belt use to 100% by the end of this year, and actively supports participating in "Buckle Up America" campaign activities. Recently, as part of the "One DOT" initiative to increase partnering and collaboration among the transportation agencies, the Commandant proposed a new buckle up theme and action plan. This theme, developed in cooperation with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) is "Safety, It's a Snap," and it's designed to promote the use of seat belts, life jackets, bike and motorcycle helmets and other safety devices in all modes of transportation. As part of this campaign "Buckle Up" safety reminders will be placed on military leave and earning statements, and Coast Guard officials who make Partnership in Education presentations during school events and assemblies will include seat belt safety messages. Also, since most boaters must drive from their homes to the water, the Coast Guard will distribute NHTSA flyers and brochures to the recreational boating community.

Commandant Instruction M5100.47, the Safety and Environmental Health Manual, requires seat belt use by all military members, both on and off duty. This instruction also requires civilian personnel to use seat belts while on official government business. The Coast Guard is a world-renowned humanitarian and safety service. We must strive to maintain this image both ashore and afloat, on liberty and on duty. Remember, "Safety, It's a Snap." This message is especially timely with the holiday season upon us. As most of us travel during this time of year, let's be particularly mindful of our responsibilities to our families and the Coast Guard - to go out and return safely.

Have a happy Thanksgiving!

Regards, FL Ames

[Flag Voice Contents](#)

This page is maintained by [HR Webmaster \(CG-1A\)](#)